



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

April 19, 2012

Mr. Isiah Leggett County Executive Executive Office Building Office 101 Monroe Street 2 nd Floor Rockville, Maryland 20850	Mr. Roger Berliner Council President Stella B. Warner Council Building 100 Maryland Avenue Rockville, Maryland 20850	Ms. Valerie Ervin Council Member Stella B. Warner Council Building 100 Maryland Avenue Rockville, Maryland 20850
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RE: PARKING SITUATION IN SOUTH SILVER SPRING

Dear Mr. Leggett, Mr. Berliner, and Ms. Ervin,

We are writing to express our concern about the lease of Silver Spring parking lot space to Discovery Communications Inc. (DCI), urge greater cooperation and transparency with our neighbors in South Silver Spring and ask Park and Planning to conduct public hearings as part of the mandatory referral process of the lease of public property to DCI.

Many neighbors are frustrated because earlier this year South Silver Spring residents had approached county government with several ideas to improve their parking situation at the Kennett Street Garage. Unbeknownst to them, county officials had already been meeting confidentially with DCI and working towards a deal that would lease several floors of that garage to DCI at sub-market rates. The County rationale for the proposed lease agreement was that it was necessary to prevent DCI from moving its facilities and jobs away from the County. Residents were not informed of the negotiations until they were nearly complete and first published in a local newspaper. The process has angered many in the community.

We welcome DCI as a corporate neighbor and recognize its valuable contributions to our community. Our board has worked cooperatively with DCI in the past, most recently supporting DCI's request to expand its Sensory Garden at the expense of losing public park land. (The County proceeded to grant DCI's request.) However, the County's desire to entice and retain corporations should be balanced with community needs. Further, the County must be more transparent in its privatization or bartering of public property.

In an effort to find common ground, we offer a few suggestions that have been suggested by the South Silver Spring community:

- ◇ Do not block off the area on the second, third and fourth levels of the garage. This will inhibit nightly and weekend use by the community. If chronic over crowding is found to exist, open a dialogue with the community on a remedy.
- ◇ If DCI wants to provide better security in garage 9 at its own expense, it should be welcomed as a contribution to the security of all the cars parked in garage 9 and not only for 300 parking spaces reserved for DCI.

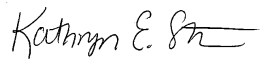
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- ◇ Increase the proposed number of shared vehicles planned at the Kennett Street garage so that fewer residents are dependent on individually owned vehicles.

Smart growth and sustainable development should appropriately limit residential parking near major transit stations. However, long-time residents do not deserve to have existing public facilities restricted and taken from them without input, consideration or transparency.

We note that there are several possibilities for greater cooperation and symbiosis between DCI, the County government, and Silver Spring residents, including prospects for shared public spaces, public key access, and several different arrangements. We urge the County and DCI to further explore them before making any potential lease deal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn E. Stevens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Kathy Stevens
Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

cc: All members of County Council;
Rollin Stanley, Director of Planning, M-NCPPC